

# Mintcake



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Reg. Charity No. 259539

February 2005

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## Hitch

There once was a fellow called Fitch  
Found VW driving a bitch  
The tyres did squeal  
When he let go the wheel  
And landed head first in a ditch

**Anon., 2005 (see p.3)**

## Editor's Comment

A new year, but events in January seemed to be very much a continuation of 2004. Four callouts, which was more or less the average over the last 12 months, of which half were to assist Langdale Ambleside team, with flooding in and around Kendal, including Troutbeck where I ended up sitting in a flooded car at the end of a birthday celebration... Certainly not a quiet start to the year! Last year's major project was the implementation of the new radio system. That is largely completed. This year sees us continue our fund-raising efforts to replace Mobile 2, our ageing VW people carrier. This is all the more necessary as the VW is soon, we hope, to be flown to Sri Lanka (see below) to assist with aid relief in the aftermath of the Asian tsunami. Arrangements have been made for a temporary replacement vehicle to transport team members to callouts. During the course of the year, however, we need to confirm the specification, raise the balance of the funds needed (£30-35,000) and then buy and fit out the new vehicle. Any readers wishing to contribute to our fund-raising effort, either in the form of ideas or actual monetary donations can contact our Fundraising Officer or Treasurer via the address on the last page. Thank you in advance to all our readers for their continued support!

*Les*

## Tsunami Update

The Sri Lanka Radio Society is very keen to have the radio equipment and vehicle. However, this organisation is not a member of the Disasters Emergency Committee, so the request has to be resubmitted by a member body. It is hoped that the British Red Cross can assist. As things stand, therefore, we expect the VW 4x4 minibus and radio equipment to be used to provide communications support to aid workers in Sri Lanka, though quite when this can happen has yet to be decided. We'll keep you updated.

### **A date for the diary: 11 March 7.30 pm**

Four weeks after the tsunami struck, Hamish visited the affected regions of Southern Thailand on behalf of his employer, Impact Development Training. His intention was to witness the extent of the impact first-hand, understand the nature of the relief effort and explore whether or not there is a legitimate role to play in the recovery. There may even be some lessons pertinent to mountain rescue.

Team members, families and guests are invited to attend a presentation involving vivid images, short videos and first-hand accounts followed by drinks at Base.

## Exercise Reports

### Wednesday 12 January – Round Robin

It's weird how all team members look the same when they are wearing hats pulled down over the eyes. There I was, the only 'sighted' member of our group of 6, shouting guidance at Jonathan on how to put the Bell stretcher together – only to realise after 5 minutes that it was Pierre! (Just to confuse matters all the more, Jonathan was not even in our group!) Oh, yes, you want to know what was going on. Well, Chris had organised a 'round robin' (!); ½ hour before it is due to start he sends out a pager message – 'bring hat and gloves'. All very confusing.

We were split into small groups then introduced to Chris's 'round robin' tasks:

- Repack Mobile 1
- Assemble a Bell stretcher
- Put a climbing harness and improvised chest harness on, and then tie into a rope
- Fit a leg traction splint and vacuum arm splint to a casualty

All very straightforward stuff that we routinely do. However the Marsden 'twists' were:

- Time the tasks to see which group was the quickest
- Penalty time for cheating (as if we would)
- Wear gloves to simulate cold hands (or just to make it much more difficult)
- Everyone to be blindfolded (by pulling their hats down over their eyes) to simulate working at night, except the one person (different for each task) giving guidance who could 'speak but not do'

A very entertaining evening where organising and communicating skills developed as the evening went on. The advantage of gaining knowledge of the team kit from repeated handling in the past was appreciated in this 'night-time' handling. By the end of the evening, many of the tasks were being done almost as fast as we do them normally! The group I was in were not the fastest overall; personally, I blame Pierre for not realising that he and Jonathan have a certain similarity of appearance when neither of them can see.

**Keith Pittman**



### Sunday 30 January – Simulated callout

On arrival at base we were presented with a scenario in which a lone walker (subsequently identified as Andy Beavon) had been seen to fall from the ridge between Yoke and Ill Bell above Kentmere.

A small group were sent off in Mobile 3 to the top of the Garburn Pass to search the ridge, taking with them the medi sac and other essentials. A larger group were deployed in Mobile 1 and Mobile 2 to search the eastern flanks of the ridge from the Kentmere Reservoir. The early mist cleared to present a clear sky and warm winter sunshine (a nice change). On arrival at the reservoir, small teams were sent up into Rainsborrow Cove to search while four of us prepared the stretcher, cas bag, vacuum mattress and a 100 metre back rope before commencing the long steep plod up towards the ridge with the kit.

The search teams in the Cove were soon alerted to the probable area in which the casualty would be found when a rucksack was seen tumbling down a rock-strewn gully. The casualty was located after a short while, high up in the gully on steep and very unstable ground about 50 metres below the ridge. The injuries diagnosed were two broken femurs, and the casualty was secured safely at the site. It was decided that the best way to evacuate the casualty was to haul him back up the gully on the stretcher and to carry him down the ridge to the waiting Mobile 3 at the Garburn Pass.

Getting the necessary kit up the gully was a difficult, time-consuming and exhausting exercise, with helmets required to protect team members from stone and rock fall. The day's award for effort went to John Everett who got two-thirds of the way up to the cas site with the vacuum mattress before volunteering to return to the vehicles at the reservoir to collect the oxygen and the sling bag (when he returned to the bottom of the gully he looked like he could have used the oxygen himself!). Eventually, the back rope was fixed and the casualty was stretchered back up on to the ridge. The exercise concluded when the casualty reached Mobile 3 and the team all got together towards the bottom of the Garburn Pass for a de-brief in the sunshine.

The key learning point from the exercise were:

- Following the improvements made to the track over the Garburn Pass, it is now effective to deploy team members from the top of the Pass for incidents up as far as the summit of Ill Bell.
- It is difficult to spot a casualty from the ridge if they happen to be down the eastern flank.

- Pete Munford could have an interesting radio conversation with the Cockermonth Team (who were also on an exercise and share Kendal's frequency) from Mobile 3 at the top of the Garburn Pass but could not be heard by all the Kendal team.
- The direct route up Yoke from the Kentmere reservoir is not the easiest way up (a personal note!).
- If you're the casualty, make sure you take your sandwiches out of your rucksack before launching said rucksack towards the rescuers to attract attention.

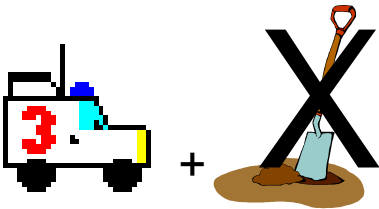
Following the de-brief, the team split into pairs and gained experience of using the new style cas cards issued by the MRC. Most team members seemed to feel that they were an improvement on the old ones.

We then set off back to base and it was time for me to undertake my secret brief of driving Mobile 2 into a ditch and getting it "well stuck". This was, of course, so that the team could practise their vehicle recovery skills, and Mobile 2 was soon back on the track with the assistance of Mobile 3 and a tow rope. Unfortunately, nobody believed that I had been given this secret brief and on returning to base I found that I had been well and truly set up when I saw the short poem written on the wall board. Clearly, I had been selected for this task as only I had a surname which rhymed with "twitch" and "ditch" etc. That's my story and I'm sticking to it!

**John Fitch, KMSRT**

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The moral of the tale, as we all know: when in a hole...



## Water Rescue

- Howie Crook has put together a PowerPoint presentation on water rescue. It's too large for inclusion with the newsletter but anyone interested can see a printout at Base or make a copy from the team computer.
- The team was not deployed to assist during the floods in Carlisle in early January as Kendal itself was still at risk. Without a boat, there is a limit to the assistance that the team can offer in such circumstances, so consideration is being given to buying a dinghy.

## Callouts



### 1 January

The new year got off on the wrong foot for a local man out walking on Farleton Knott with his family. A slip resulted in an ankle injury and a wait in high winds and driving rain until the 17 team members attending were able to carry him down to the waiting vehicle for onward transport to Westmorland General Hospital.

### 5 January

Langdale Ambleside asked for our assistance in searching for a man reported to have suffered a head injury in very high winds somewhere between High Close and Silver Howe. 13 Kendal team members and the team's search dog attended. The casualty was eventually able to make his way down to a pub in Grasmere from where he called for an ambulance to take him to hospital.

### 14 January

A couple in their 40s walking the Coast to Coast phoned for assistance somewhere above Easedale Tarn when darkness fell and they became disoriented. Keswick and L&A teams were alerted, and L&A requested Kendal's assistance. 12 team members + dog started to search the paths on both sides of Easedale Tarn. The couple were found by L&A team members who homed in on whistles from the couple who could see the searchers' torches. The couple themselves had no torch...

### 22 January

On a beautiful crisp cold day a lady slipped on an icy path above the Garburn Pass when attempting to help someone else in her party who had also slipped. Unfortunately, the would-be helper ended up with a dislocated fracture of her right ankle. The frozen conditions meant that it was possible to drive a team Land Rover all the way to the casualty which enabled her to be evacuated to hospital more speedily.

✱

Stewart Hulse from Langdale Ambleside team was recently interviewed on Radio Four's *PM* programme about mobile phones. He explained that they have both advantages and disadvantages, as all involved in mountain rescue will be aware. He then went on to state that he regarded a torch – and the ability to use it properly - as the most important piece of safety equipment fell walkers should carry. Some of those who responded to this item were not convinced, but all teams in the Lakes have attended callouts to assist people who had become stuck solely or very largely because they failed to carry a torch and were therefore unable to find their way down safely. The callout on 14 January was a case in point.

## What's On

### Wednesday 9 February

Training: a number of items, viz. Red Shovel talk (you'll have to come along to find out what this means), radios, auto Resusci Annie 19.00h

### Wednesday 16 February

Equipment Working Group 19.30h

### Sunday 27 February

Training: Winter Navigation/Skills 09.00h

### Wednesday 2 March

Main committee meeting 19.30h

### 4-6 March

Scotland Winter Training

### Wednesday 9 March

Training: Downed Aircraft / Orienteering 19.00h

### Friday 11 March

Tsunami presentation by Hamish Wilson: 19.30h (see p.1)

### Sunday 20 March

Training: Rescue / Evacuation 09.00h

### Wednesday 23 March

Equipment Working Group 19.30h

### 6 April

Ops & Membership sub-committee meeting 19.30h

### Wednesday 27 April

Equipment Working Group 19.30h

### 4 May

Main committee meeting 19.30h

### Wednesday 18 May

Equipment Working Group 19.30h

### 1 June

Ops & Membership sub-committee meeting 19.30h

### Wednesday 22 June

Equipment Working Group 19.30h

### Wednesday 6 July

Main committee meeting 19.30h

### 3 August

Ops & Membership sub-committee meeting 19.30h

## Scottish Training Weekend 2005

For those who have signed up, the £15 deposit **is required by 9 February** – i.e. the next Wednesday training session. Either make a cheque payable to “Kendal Mountain Search and Rescue Team” or place cash in an envelope labelled “Scottish Winter Trip” and marked with your name and then leave it in the “Training” pigeonhole.

## Shorts

- Congratulations to Bob Gold who was confirmed as a hill-going member of the team at the last Ops & Membership sub-committee meeting. Bob can now choose between his trademark flat cap and an official team hat!
- First aid certificates are now in pigeonholes for those who took the Casualty Care certificate exam in December.
- BBC 1's *Country File* programme on Sunday 6 February contained a video diary by the LDNPA ecologist who was in charge of the juniper planting on Great Howe, Longsleddale in December on which **Mintcake** reported in January. Andy Dell explained the team's role in this project. Planting is also planned on Goat Scar in Longsleddale. Possible dates are 12/13 March or 3/4 April – make a note in your diary to sharpen your dibber.

## Fundraising

- The town centre collection for the team is on Saturday 19 February 2005. **Everyone** is needed. If everyone gives one hour we should be able to collect a good amount. Please contact Liz to book a slot.

## Contacts

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**Copy deadline for next issue: 2 March 2005**